## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

May 16-May 31, 2010

#### HEALTH

Afghan Private Hospitals Join Efforts to Fight Tuberculosis: On May 2, eight private hospitals in Kabul signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to join efforts to fight tuberculosis (TB). Under the MOU, the private hospitals will provide TB detection and treatment services free of charge under USAID's TB DOTS program, supplementing the 30 public hospitals and health facilities already providing these services. The MoPH will provide the hospitals with laboratory kits, medication, and training.



Ministry of Public Health and private hospital representatives sign a memorandum of understanding to join efforts to fight TB.

PHOTO: USAID/TB DOTS

DOTS, which stands for Directly Observed Therapy Short Course, is the world standard for TB eradication

and involves the detection and direct daily administration of medication by healthcare providers. Tuberculosis, which kills more than 9,000 Afghans each year, is being effectively combated in rural areas through the TB DOTS program. Detection and treatment success rates are impressive and the system is bringing many rural areas up to international norms for diagnosis and treatment success. Urban results, however, have not been as successful, and urban infection and deaths are on the rise. Getting more hospitals involved in treatment is one key to success.

The MoPH Office of Private Sector Coordination and the National Tuberculosis Control Program led the effort in partnership with the Afghan Private Hospital Association. The MoPH plans to extend this initiative to private hospitals in other urban areas in the near future.



A herder displays cashmere at the Road Show.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

#### **AGRICULTURE**

Celebrating Cashmere in Panjsher: In mid-May, the first Cashmere Road Show took place in Panjsher province, with participation from both U.S. and Afghan government officials. Last year, the USG-funded Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP) visited villages in Panjsher and taught 2,700 herders and their families how to comb, collect, and clean cashmere. This event celebrated the success of the past training efforts, and 25 to 30 herders showed up with samples of their cashmere to sell. Their efforts were well rewarded as eager buyers bought all the offered cashmere on contract. The cashmere sellers were paid about \$13.50 per kilogram, the average

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output from four Panjsher goats. The estimated number of cashmere goats in the province is about 25,000.

#### **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Students Graduate from Business Internship Program: This month, 131 students from Hirat University received certificates of accomplishment for completing a three-month internship program organized under the USAID-funded Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project. This is the third graduating class since the ASMED internship program began in Afghanistan's western region in 2007. The internship program exposes students to real-world applications in the business environment and gives them practical



Students graduate from the ASMED business internship program.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

experience working inside a business. As a direct result of this program, private sector organizations and government offices are already employing several of the recent graduates.



An aerial view of the Tarakhil Power Plant. PHOTO: USAID/AIRP

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Energy Networks Maintain Steady Power in Kabul: During the second week of May, a request came to the USAID-funded 105 megawatt (MW) Tarakhil Power Plant located on the outskirts of Kabul. One of the transmissions lines of the Northeast Power System (NEPS) about 200 km away was damaged. Could the power plant supply the electricity during the repairs?

Six months earlier, the request could not have been granted. However, in December 2009 the fully energized 105 MW plant came on-line, providing

enough back-up power to keep the system operating. During the repair to the transmission line, the plant supplied a morning peak of 85 MW. The supplied power ensured that the lights stayed on for an estimated 500,000 residents during the energy-hungry daylight hours.

"The incredible thing," said a top energy official with USAID's Office of Infrastructure, Engineering and Energy, "is that the system was down and nobody even knew it. A year ago, Kabul would have been dark." A further success is that communication was seamless between the plant and Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, Afghanistan's power utility. "This is really a routine activity at this point," the plant manager said. "When a line goes down, other stations pick it up."

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# PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM Community Infrastructure Handover Ceremony:

On May 10, Afghan citizens and officials in Hirat's Saywoshan Valley celebrated the completion of four small bridges over irrigation canals and a school boundary wall. The structures, which were built under USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) Program, are now owned by the community. The boundary wall provides privacy and security for female students, which will greatly increase school attendance. The bridges, which were destroyed in October 2009 by anti-government



Saywoshan residents stand on a new bridge. PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

elements before Afghan and international forces brought stability, will allow greater mobility and safe passage for Saywoshan communities.

Afghan officials at the handover ceremony highlighted the importance of providing a safe environment to encourage students, especially girls, to continue their education in rural areas. In their remarks, the district governor and chief of police urged community members to encourage others to continue to support government peace and development efforts and expressed appreciation to USAID for the completed construction projects.



Female Afghan officials in Baghlan learn about the media and its uses.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

#### **CROSS-CUTTING**

Tuning in to Women and Media: On May 16, PAIMAN Radio successfully completed the first of a series of two workshops focusing on women and media in Baghlan province. Through a State Department public diplomacy grant, PAIMAN conducted a training workshop to strengthen the skills of 20 female officials already in leadership positions. The second set of workshops will introduce younger females in university and high school to the idea of using media to create messages and influence.

The use of media by women has proved to be a critical gap in Baghlan. During the campaign leading up to the August 2009 elections, eight women ran for seats on the provincial council, but only two took advantage of radio and TV for their campaigns. PAIMAN, located in Baghlani-Jadid, provides a critical link with citizens in a very unstable district. The grant also provided the station with the necessary equipment to increase its capacity, enabling PAIMAN's progressive programming to reach all citizens within the district as well as the more remote surrounding areas.